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STATE COUNCIL OF CIVIL DEFENSE
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NATIONAL CIVIL DEFENSE WEEK - SEPTEMBER 9 THROUGH 15, 1956

PART I - GENERAL INFORMATION

1. President Eisenhower has designated the period September 9 through 15, 1956, "National Civil Defense Week." The theme of the week's program is "preparedness."

2. The State Council of Civil Defense has previously furnished all County and Local Civil Defense Directors with a copy of the Federal Civil Defense Administration's publication "Leadership Guide - National Civil Defense Week." This booklet contains not only program suggestions, but also a list of promotional materials which county and local organizations may obtain by writing directly to the National Office of the Federal Civil Defense Administration at Battle Creek, Michigan. (The June 1 deadline for placing orders has been extended and materials may still be obtained by writing to Battle Creek.)

PART II - RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The State Council of Civil Defense strongly urges all county and local civil defense organizations to take full advantage of National Civil Defense Week as a means of furthering county and local defense programs. It is recommended that particular emphasis be placed on recruitment, school defense plans and natural disaster preparedness. Each of these is discussed in some detail in the paragraphs which follow.

4. All civil defense officials and workers are keenly aware of the vital need for developing "depth of organization." The State Council of Civil Defense suggests, therefore, that all county and local organizations conduct special recruiting drives during National Civil Defense Week. Since past experience indicates that "wide open" campaigns for increased membership usually are not very productive, it is further suggested that county and local drives be built around what is sometimes referred to as the "every-member-get-a-member" system. Under such a plan, each presently enrolled official and worker would strive to recruit one particular individual whom he, or she, personally might "adopt" and specially train to serve as his, or her, own "relief," or counterpart. For example, each welfare worker would strive to recruit and train a friend, or neighbor, who would eventually be in position periodically to assume the present worker's duties as required in prolonged emergency operations. This would appear to be the soundest practical means of developing needed "depth of organization."

5. The majority of Pennsylvania's schools, colleges and universities now have sound and well developed self-protection programs. Since the last two nationwide civil defense tests have been held when most educational institutions were not in formal session, there has, unfortunately, been no opportunity for simultaneous, statewide test of school civil defense programs. For this reason, the State Council of Civil Defense is asking that all Pennsylvania schools, colleges and universities test their individual self-protection programs, at least in modified form, at 11:00 A.M., E.D.T., Wednesday, September 12, 1956. That is the date which the Federal Civil Defense Administration has "earmarked" for school civil defense activities.

6. The State Council of Civil Defense here requests all County and Local Civil Defense Directors to extend to local school administrators all possible assistance in the development and test of school defense programs. In this connection, the following key points should be kept constantly in mind: Where local plans call for evacuation in the event of sufficient warning time, tests of school evacuation plans definitely are in order. On the other hand, the ever-present possibility of "sneak" attacks and the possible use of high speed missiles, both of which reduce possible warning time to only a few minutes at best, definitely leave the "duck and cover" principle the soundest procedure to be followed under certain circumstances. Finally, while three or four feet of dense "covering" material is required to provide "full" protection against radioactive fallout, the inner portions of the ground floors of most buildings provide roughly 50%, and basement spaces approximately 90%, protection from that particular hazard.

7. To assure the widest possible participation in the scheduled school activities, Governor Leader plans to address a letter to the administrative heads of all schools, colleges and universities in Pennsylvania, urging them to test their institutional defense plans at 11:00 A.M., E.D.T., Wednesday, September 12, 1956.

8. Act No. 135, approved September 3, 1955, places upon State, county and local civil defense organizations specific responsibility for action aimed at the protection of life and property, in the event of flood, fire, explosion or other natural disasters of major proportions. For this reason, the State Council of Civil Defense hereby requests all county and local civil defense organizations to carry out, during National Civil Defense Week, simulated emergency operations, designed both to demonstrate and to test the ability of local forces to meet those countless problems which may stem from natural disasters.

9. The State Council of Civil Defense strongly urges all county and local organizations to develop their plans for natural disaster tests on a truly realistic basis. They should be built around hurricanes, floods, crippling ice or snow storms, major train wrecks or similar disasters likely to be faced in each particular community. In addition, every effort should be made to provide for active participation not only by all civil defense and emergency units within the county, but also by all personnel comprising those units. Inter-county tests stressing mutual aid are definitely in order. The State Council will exercise no "centralized control" over natural disaster tests conducted during National Civil Defense Week and test details, including times and dates, will be left to the decision of county and local officials. In this general connection, however, the Council strongly recommends that no county or local disaster tests be held on Sunday, when the movement of emergency vehicles over public highways would seriously jeopardize public safety and convenience.

10. Governor Leader plans to address a letter to the heads of all local government units in Pennsylvania, urging them and their fellow officials not only to assist in the promotion of local activities associated with National Civil Defense Week, but also actively to participate in them. In addition, the State Council of Civil Defense has shipped to all County Civil Defense Directors bulk supplies of the booklet entitled "Mr. Civil Defense Tells About Natural Disasters!" It is hoped that these will be of assistance both in recruiting activities and in the promotion of county and local disaster tests.

11. The State Council of Civil Defense will place the accidental injury compensation provisions of Act No. 135, approved September 3, 1955, in effect in connection with the natural disaster activities outlined in Paragraphs 8 and 9, above. All County and Local Civil Defense Directors shall, however, be held responsible for the conduct of all county and local operations in strict accordance with the general safety provisions prescribed for previous statewide tests, notably those set forth in Information Circular No. 53, dated September 13, 1954.

PART III - RELATED INFORMATION

12. The State Council of Civil Defense will continue to play an active part in the promotion of National Civil Defense Week and will furnish County and Local Civil Defense Directors with pertinent news releases and similar materials released from this office. However, the primary purpose of Civil Defense Week is to further the development of county and local organizations and success of the program consequently will be largely dependent on the nature and extent of county and local efforts and activities.

Richard Gerstell
Director of Civil Defense